

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 DPW-01 AID-05 IO-10 SCS-03 SCA-01

CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IGA-01 OPR-02 SY-05 A-01

USSH-00 SCCT-01 OC-05 CCO-00 OMB-01 /103 W

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P R 241048Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3039

AMEMBASSY PARIS

INFO DIA WASHDC

CINCPAC CAMP HM SMITH HI

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

SECDEF WASHDC

COMPAC HONOLULU HI

AMCTHAI J

DEPCHIEF UDORN RTAFB

13 AF ASIC CLARK AFB RP

USSAG/IN NKP RTAFB THAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 2070

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, LA

SUBJ: INCIDENT IN BAN HOU EI SAI

REF: (A) VIENTIANE 1998

(B) VIENTIANE 2050

1. THIS IS AN UPDATE TO REF A, BASED UPON CONVERSATIONS
HELD IN VIENTIANE MARCH 23 WITH USAID AREA COORDINATOR
HUXTABLE.

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2. PRIOR TO THE AFFAIR OF MARCH 19 A TWO-WEEK

PROGRAM OF ANTI-AMERICANISM HAD BEEN MOUNTED BY SEVERAL STUDENT LEADERS, NOTABLY SAKDY. MINIMAL ATTEMPTS TO NEUTRALIZE THE ANIT-AMERICAN DEMONSTRATIONS WERE MADE BY VIENTIANE-SIDE POLICE AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, AND IN HUXTABLE'S VIEW HAD NOT THE CITED INCIDENT OCCURRED, ANOTHER WOULD HAVE.

3. THE FIGHT DESCRIBED IN REF A WAS PROVOKED BY SAKDY, WHO ARRIVED AT THE PARTY UNINVITED AND CLEARLY INTOXICATED. FROM A PROMINENT POSITION NEAR THE STAGE HE MADE OBNOXIOUS AND INFLAMMATORY STATEMENTS, AND THE AID LOCAL EMPLOYEE WHO WAS ACTING AS MASTER OF CEREMONIES TRIED TO GET HIM TO LEAVE. AFTER A FEW PUNCHES HAD BEEN TRADED SAKDY WAS RESCUED FROM THE WRATH OF THE 350-400 ATTENDEES BY THE EFFORTS OF USAID AMERICANS AND LAO EMPLOYEES, AND TAKEN TO TOWN FOR FIRST AID. HE THEN ROUNDED UP OTHER PSEUDO-STUDENTS AND SEVERAL PATHET LAO SOLDIERS, BOTH ELEMENTS BEING ARMED, AND RETURNED TO THE PARTY THREATENING TO KILL THE AMERICANS AND AID EMPLOYEES. HUXTABLE, JOHNSON, BOWMAN AND FAMILIES, SEPARATED FROM SAGE AND ALEX, LOCKED THEMSELVES IN USAID OFFICES, AND AFTER A HALF-HOUR ESCAPED THROUGH BRUSH TO THE RIVER BANK, WADED TO NEAREST MEKONG ISLAND AND THERE SPENT THE REST OF THE NIGHT. MEANWHILE ALEX, SAGE AND BIRDAIR PILOT, JACK KNOTT, WERE DETAINED BY FAR MILITARY GUARDS AT THE AC'S HOUSE. ALL CROSSED TO CHIENG KHONG (THAILAND) LATER THAT DAY, AND THE NEXT DAY WERE FOLLOWED BY FOUR TOP USAID LOCAL EMPLOYEES, ALSO INTIMIDATED AND THREATENED BY STUDENTS/PL.

4. ON MARCH 23, STUDENT LEADERS FROM VIENTIANE, (KHAM SAI, KAHMPHAN AND CHALERN) ARRIVED IN BHS, AND WERE RECEIVED BY THREE JEEP-LOADS OF STUDENTS AND OFFICIALS (INCLUDING DEPUTY CHAO KHOUENG KONG PHENG, SOMDY, SAKDY AND THAVORN) AND PROCEEDED TO DRIVE THROUGH TOWN IN MOTOR-CADE SHOUTING ANTI-AMERICAN SLOGANS.

5. MEANWHILE, GENERAL VANNESANG, THE CHAO KHOUENG, WHO IS THE MAN WHO CAN BEST EXERCISE CONTROL, HAS BEEN IN LUANG PRABANG SINCE MARCH 18, AND HAS NOT YET RETURNED
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TO BHS.

6. HUXTABLE'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION IS THAT THE PRESENT STATE OF LAWLESSNESS AND UNCERTAINTY WILL CONTINUE UNTIL AND UNLESS GENERAL VANNESANG EXERTS HIS AUTHORITY AND TAKES FIRM STEPS TOWARD THE PSUEDO-STUDENTS. GIVEN THE EXISTING CLIMATE, IN WHICH PATHET LAO INFLUENCE IS PARAMOUNT, THERE IS LITTLE ROOM TO

BELIEVE SUCH FIRM STEPS WILL BE TAKEN.

7. FOR THE TIME BEING HUXTABLE, ALEX AND SAGE WILL BE OPERATING OUT OF LUANG PRABANG, WHERE HUXTABLE IS TAKING OVER AS AREA COORDINATOR. JOHNSON WILL STAY IN CHIENG KHONG TO BE THE U.S. OBSERVER AND TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH THE USAID/BHS STAFF. BOWMAN IS IN VIENTIANE, WHERE HE WILL BE COMPLETING HIS EVALUATION OF THE PROJECTS ON WHICH HE HAS WORKED.

8. WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS WE WILL RECOMMEND WHETHER TO CONTINUE THE AID PROGRAM IN BAN HOUET SAI. OUR CURRENT ASSESSMENT IS THAT THE AUTHORITIES WILL NOT TAKE THE NECESSARY ACTION TO CREATE A CLIMATE IN WHICH THE PROGRAM CAN GO FORWARD.

9. AMBASSADOR AND USIAD DIRECTOR MARCH 23 CONVERSATION WITH PRIME MINISTER FOLLOWS SEPTTEL.
WHITEHOUSE

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Message Attributes

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